

The Charm of Half Cents

- A. The Course
- B. Why I Enjoy Collecting Half Cents
- C. The Literature
- D. Ways to Collect
- E. Varieties, Subvarieties, and Die States
- F. Liberty Caps
Draped Bust
Turban
Classic
- G. Errors and the Minting Process

Quiz on double-struck, one side
- H. New Subvariety
- I. Summary & Conclusion

R. TETTENHORST
JULY, 1992

- INTRODUCE EACH OTHER
- HOW MANY COLLECT 1/2¢?

Charm of Half Cents

Point of view - hobby, collector, fun

INVESTOR
DEALER (Full or part)
SCHOLAR, RESEARCHER

all legit.

⊗ Bachelor of Having A Good Time - Pitrim Sorokin.

That is the best point of view. Not inconsistent with careful scholarship, because for many of us learning more IS part of having a good time.

Will end, in fact, with a ^{new} example of original research of the type suitable for a doctoral dissertation in which you will be invited to sit as the academic panel evaluating the dissertation.

A. The course

NO BREVITY - WOODY ALLEN: TOLSTOY'S WAR AND PEACE: IT'S ABOUT RUSSIA

What I will cover, subject to your approval:

Why I enjoy collecting half cents

The literature

Ways to collect

Varieties, subvarieties, and die states

Liberty caps, draped bust, turban, classic

Errors and the minting process (a little quiz about errors)

At the end of the course this afternoon, I am going to present for your consideration a new subvariety of half cent never before described as such and ask you to vote on whether you agree that it should be considered a new subvariety.

In general, the perspective for the course will be that of a collector of half cents by variety and subvariety. ^{AT POINTS, GIVE MY OPINIONS, WHICH ARE PURELY THAT. EXPECT DISAGREEMENT.}

... and I may tell a few jokes, relevant or not.

What I will not cover, or cover only slightly (Loring):

Grading

Pricing

Preservation and storage

Slabbing controversy

(In general) As an investment, or other monetary aspects.

(Cherry-picking a rare variety as a less valuable, dealing, trading.)

Emission Sequences - die deterioration, arguments, disagreements, complex, dies removed from press for repair, other dies used, then original dies returned

Ⓢ Please speak up; interrupt with questions -

B. Why I Enjoy Collecting Half Cents

1. Smallest denomination

2. As a result, less care. ^{in minting process} Careless about weights, condition, errors, odd planchets. Records sometimes sloppy at to quantity. Even broke the law.

3. Obsolete - finite - contained - missing dates
4. Enough varieties to be a challenge, not so many as to be overwhelming. Cohen lists 88 varieties plus 11 subvarieties plus 39 proof-only varieties. Breen a few more.
5. Many of the varieties are naked-eye obvious - interesting
6. Four famous fakes (95G2, Dr. E., Mick Res, 93 Washington Face) and mint shenanigans
7. Prices for many not high. Close to 50 varieties in Fine for around \$100 or less and the later dates 09-57, except for a few rarities, for about half that.
8. Yet some rarities, some extreme rarities, proof only
9. Many ways to collect; can set your own challenge, modify it as you continue
10. Not very many collectors, camaraderie, EAC 1/2¢ happening
11. Two excellent books, other fine sources of info.
12. EAC Penny-Wise articles, always unanswered questions--always more to learn
13. CQR price list by variety and subvariety, ten grades. Condition Census.
14. Most of the classification and descriptions of half cents are logical, but there are some exceptions dictated solely by history or custom. Delightful inconsistencies.
15. Intellectual challenge. Controversies, differences of opinion, new discoveries, room for research even by less experienced collectors. Lots of opportunities to study something more carefully. (Mention two I have done, and then propose a third.)
16. Early in auctions - dinner, theatre, sleep, or. . .
17. If do it for fun, value as a long-term investment (just enough to rationalize to one's self and spouse. . .)
18. No sex.

210 (12)
C. The Literature - Sources of Information

- SEE HANDOUT
- Red Book is important. Many other general books - U.S. Coins, Early Frossard, Gilbert, Empire Guide, Cohen I and II, Breen 103%, Penny-Wise, CQR
 - useful, quick attribution table
 - die states, truly encyclopedic

- Auction Catalogues (available on loan)
 - Cohen (Sup 2-92)
 - Jack Robinson (Sup 1-89)
 - Ruby Garrett
 - Brobston FPL Stack's 196
 - Spence Stack's Mar '75
 - Anderson-Dupont
 - Alvord
 - Current FPL's, CVMcCawley, Tom Reynolds, JRM, Auctions by Grellman & McCawley

Many other general sales have super 1/2¢

- Private letters, notes, conversations, ANA seminars, EAC Convention

D. Ways to Collect

Type (93-97 Liberty Cap, 00-08 bust, 09-36 turban, 40-57 classic)

Expanded type (1793 Head left, 1794, 1795 or 1794-5 Thick planchet, LE, 1800-02C1 old reverse)

Date (without proof-only issues) including 1837 token

Expanded date (Red Book major variety) (several 1795, 2 96, 2 97, 2 02, 5-6 04, 3 05, 2 06, 2 08, 3 09, 2 28, Pf only years)

Variety - Gilbert, Breen, Cohen

Variety and subvariety

Variety, subvariety, plus varieties of proof only years

Die states

Errors and oddities

Subsets - just draped busts

1/2¢ exonumia

Random - whatever you like

Grades - highest available - or clear, medium grade (TERM: condition census)

Knowledge - research - photography - catalogues

FUN - stops being fun. . . get a different hobby.

Primary focus of this course - variety and subvariety, plus knowledge.

Q? Break

E. Varieties, Subvarieties, and Die States

Not scripture, but prevailing usage (not always unanimous)

Variety is each combination of obverse/reverse dies. If one or both are changed, new variety, even if a combination of two dies, each of which has been used with others

GILBERT had two varieties which do not exist; several unknown to him discovered later. COHEN listed one in 1st Edit, about which he changed his mind and delisted in his second edit. So not always so easy; so cut and dried.

Subvariety - Please pay attention to this, because I am going to propose a new subvariety, partially newly discovered and partially newly asserted as being, in fact, a subvariety. You will be the first people to hear of this discovery, and after the presentation, I will ask you to vote as to whether or not you agree with me that it is a subvariety, or if you feel it is something else. No clear agreement as to what constitutes a subvariety.

In general, something is considered a subvariety if it has the same obverse and reverse dies but has a significant change in edge or planchet.



Die State refers to the deterioration of the die as it is used. Some are very conspicuous and well-known (1811 4 star break, 1826 etc., 1808 cud). Some are great fun to collect. (1804 C6 - 40 die states! None expensive. Gene Braig.) Some are a little mysterious (1796 C1 any without crack?) And, one is famous, and a semantic oddity (1804 C3 is a separate major/Red book variety from C5, but not a separate minor variety, just early die states! Roger de-listed in AHC II. So, when you see a coin that appears different, you can ask: Is it a different variety, subvariety, die-state, mint error, undertype (but not subvariety), alteration outside the mint, damage, or something else?

7:40 (Q) BREAK ?
F. Types and Dates

Will use Cohen varieties - most widely - I am most familiar (some Breen, Gilbert) Roger tried, with a high degree of success, to number them in the order in which they were used. Breen also, some differences of opinion.

Liberty Cap 1793 - 1797 - 5 dates

Most interesting group - take date by date. (1) C3

9:45 1793 A one-year type. Expensive because type collectors need this date. Not super rare.

Interesting because first 1/2c, first U.S. coinage (with Chain cent), smaller diameter, thicker, 104 gr weight, clearly different design and type than 94-97.

Four varieties (2 obverse, 3 reverse) see Cohen. None much rarer than the others, although auction catalogues may occasionally say "Rarest variety of year." That is true, but not relevant type. One interesting die state (FAME break) (X) My advice, if date or variety collector--buy a clean low grade, relatively inexpensive coin early on. (2) C1
Don't go back and upgrade or add the other varieties until you have filled your other priorities. Too much money in less interesting coins. (Note: Investment advice might be just the opposite: "Buy a few high grade rarities. . .")

First of our four intriguing FAKES, the so-called Washington pattern by Edwin Bishop around 1860 or a bit earlier, was made by carefully grinding off the bust of a genuine 1793 C2 and soldering, or brazing in that space a previously prepared copper bust of George Washington. Identified as a fake as early as 1878, and conclusively analyzed as such by Walter Breen. Don't have to worry about being sold it. Two known. One in U.S. Mint Collection (Nerve - made to sell to U.S. Mint as something they had made!).

9:50 (3) C4
1794 To a date collector: Average interest.
Major type: Below average, (expanded type collector) above average (1 year).
Variety collector: Below average: the varieties all look rather similar - placement of date, type of numerals, number of leaves, berries, denominator, etc. Not devoid

of interest some ^{varieties} rare and expensive, challenging. High ⁴C7 clashed hair wave, cherry-picked as lower grade ⁵C9 ~~10~~

But, to a subvariety collector: outstanding. One of three years (1795 and 97) with very interesting and challenging subvarieties. The small edge letter-large edge letters exist on 6 of 9 varieties. One unique, another only 3 known. 1b and 2b known to Alvord in the 1920s, but still only about 20 1b's and 15 2b's have turned up. The other four were discovered only in the 1970s. Could well be a 7b, 8b, or 9b out there. (Find that and you have converted a \$200 coin in good to a \$10,000).

⁶ Picture from AHC2 = ^Y

How to tell - get a C1 (normally LEL) and any other variety (normally SEL). Look at space between 'R E' of 'HUNDRED', (page 8, 9 of AHC2).

Clashed dies.

⁷C2 ⁸C3 ⁴C4 ~~10~~

⁹ BREAK

REVERSE OF 1793?

10:00
10:15

1795

Another fascinating year. Changed weight in middle of year from 104 gr. to 84 gr. Dropped edge letters. Created one pair of subvarieties; 2a (thick planchet, lettered edge) and 2b (thin planchet, plain edge). Most intentionally different of any subvarieties. Took act of Congress. We will come back to this change in weight and edge lettering, so keep it in mind.

berry left, leaf A

⁹C6

¹⁰C4

no berry left
leaf C

Two interesting eye-ball varieties. No pole. Comma in date. Errors in die cutting. ~~10~~ Later in the year, two more pairs of subvarieties. C5 and C6 each struck on two types of planchets. One was the regular, new thin planchet. The other was planchets cut from spoiled large cents. ^{Seal} Thicker, heavier, but by carelessness, not intact. ^{Miss plan edge - 5b, 6b} Mint began to get sloppy. First appearance of errors in any quantity, which we will talk about later.

You will have some to look at

First appearances of TAL undertype -- 50¢ trial pieces. Why doesn't Walter call a subvariety?

One other interesting item: One of Gilbert's two great blunders--a non-existent variety: thick planchet plain edge. His G2. Really just ground off. After he described it, a few others were made as well, until recognized as an alteration. (Last Gilbert variety story - \$25). Quite rare. But any of you who want one can make one which will be no less legit than the one Gilbert had or the one I have, if you don't mind converting, say, a \$200 VG coin into a \$25 oddity. The second of the four famous fakes, and only one to be author unknown.

Impress your friends.
One of rarest G vats.
Less 6 known.
Hav'nt appeared in
auction 30 yrs.
Roger Cohen didn't
have one...

10:25 1796

Interesting to some, boring to others. Two varieties, very obvious, pole and no pole (same reverse). Expensive, because rare as a date.

11 C1 Interesting, all C1's known have strong die crack. Explains its super rarity. Search for one, it cracked in minting process. "My cousin has. . . First of super-rare varieties. Price! About seventeen known after 100 years of looking! Yet, surprisingly, 3 of them are mint state! Then, fourth best in only fine. EAC2.P 25 how to tell 95 no pole for 96 if date is missing. Be careful, some worn or altered 1795 C5's or C6's (light date) sold as 1796's. Easy to tell. . . Berry left AND low leaf to C. ULAN BATOR
RC's 2 G4
14K, 17K
worn & porous

12 C2 Interesting also, C2 most common liberty cap in mint state (possibly except for 1795 C1), and especially with red. Saved early. Br "9 or 10 MS 1796's" Br 162-b.3 "at least 8 MS. . . several others barely missing MS."

13 C3 Also interesting because third of famous fakes. The Dr. Edwards' copy. Rare. Know location of seven. Mystery of sizes and weights (P-W article). Copy of fake. (Rec'db) X

about 1796
Advice - Like 1793. Get a clean, low grade early and postpone upgrade. However, as to varieties, if a no pole comes along, seize the opportunity, even if you can afford only one coin that year.

10:30 1797 Another interesting year, in part because of subvarieties and die states.

Three varieties, clearly recognizable and different:

14 C1 1 over 1

15 C2 long denticles, date low, far from bust

16 C3 neither of the above. Location of 1 very near hair.

17 C1 many of TAL's - details often visible. Also one of most interesting collection of die states as obverse die cracked and shattered. Mostly common. So, even some people who do not collect die states in general enjoy collecting this one. And TAL undertypes.

X C2 Nothing special.

famous
C3 Very special Three subvarieties. Most plain edge. Quite a few LE. Red Book SO well known that often considered a necessary part of a complete variety collection, even though technically a subvariety. One of two (95 C2 a&b). Gilbert called a separate variety. (His G1) Expensive. MYSTERY--why resume LE after two years?

Gripped edge - for some unknown reason, perhaps recognition that too thin for LE, experimented with G.E. but decided to heck with it. Very rare and expensive subvariety. About 12 known RC's G6 14K AG3 5K
about twice Once in a great while one in low grade gets cherry-picked. But harder, because even a non-copper

dealer or collector will check the edge to see if it is lettered or not. Many, but not all, will recognize gripped edge. Most dealers have never seen one. *AHC2 p.30*

10:40
1798 1799 None minted - well, not exactly.

(19) C3
None dated - 97 over 98.

Sheldon 164

You can see this one, too.

END OF CAPS Most interesting type; also most expensive, but not prohibitively so. Specimens in Good condition are easy to identify as to variety. And, there are about a dozen different varieties of liberty caps that can be obtained in Good for around \$250 apiece. Yet, Roger's '96 no pole in that grade sold for \$17,600! Hand-made dies create noticeable differences.

My opinion - MOST INTERESTING YEAR 1795
(To a variety and subvariety collector) 1797
1794

Most expensive, & fortunately, 1796
least interesting 1793

But depends if you are collecting by type.

Could have a lot of fun - many do - collecting caps of 94, 95, and 97 only.

10:45 (20) C1
1800 New type, draped bust. Old reverse - Almost a one year type for expanded type set. But as a year, below average interest. Only one variety, quite common, even in high grade!
Some items of interest: (besides new type)
early and late die states
a few large cent undertypes (which WB calls a subvariety and RC does not)
mint state coins available short of selling your car.

(X)
1801 None dated. But, challenge for the researcher - check all LC undertypes and try to identify. If find 1801 LC under there (1800 1/2c), voila - a 1/2c struck (probably) in 1801!

10:50
1802 Another famous year. Like 96 in some ways. Two varieties--quite different - one rare, the other very rare. Also rather expensive, since there is no common variety. However, NO MINT STATE 1802 exists, only year in half cent series for which this is TRUE. *AM indicated over 1/2c - many about 1/2c*

(21) C1
One obverse: Overdate 2 over 0 of unused 1800 die.

C1 Reverse of 1800 - single leaves, but worn. Less than twenty known. *Roger's 65 14K*
One of 8 super rare varieties (Big 5 96 no pole, 02 reverse
00, 08C1, 09C1, G. Edge) With 1800 almost a one year
type, call it a 1 1/200 year type (in honor of denominator)

22 C2 - New reverse. Quite different, not just upper leaves. *leaves thicker letters larger*
This is Finest known is VF 30 to EF 40. All 1802's over spoiled
large cents. Sometimes visible, sometimes not. *Rightly why no uncs*
normal compared to '95. Can sometimes buy undergraded
because of undertype appearing to be dents or damage.

ADVICE Can buy a low-grade and upgrade later if tight
budget. But, if a clean VG or better becomes available,
worth taking. Don't be too fussy about marks. Hardly
any of them look great. Just don't overpay or overgrade
because "they all look that way." A VF detail banged
up which would be a net G if it were 1800 or 1803, is
still net G. Don't overpay, but don't walk away either.
The advice "Don't buy problem coins" is not quite as
valid for 1802. And, a particularly clean coin is probably
worth a premium over the listed price for the grade.

10155 *11/00* *24* *1803* Relatively speaking, a boring year. Four varieties,
none of them distinctive. C2 is rare because the die
broke early in its use. Not known better than EF; others
easy, even available in mint state. Dramatic die states,
etc. A cud. For advanced collectors C3 1st use/2nd
use p. 43-47 of AHC 2.

ADVICE If you are going for a complete variety set,
you will need all four. But, if you are budgeting your
acquisitions, the varieties of this year should be last
of the common draped busts to fill in.

1102 *1804* A vintage year. Along with 1809, only one million year.
Largest number of half cents. Twelve (or maybe thirteen)
varieties.
Some eyeball different, some quite rare.
Some of the most interesting die state progressions and *one*
die state so famous that it's listed in Red Book as
a major variety.

Controversy. *including mint state*
Many coins available in all grades; most are priced reasonably.
One could specialize just in 1804, have a lot of fun.
Said twelve or thirteen-C2 controversy (same variety;
two different major varieties!) *25 C10 Cr 4 SE*
Cross 4 Plain 4 *26 C12 Cr 4 NS*
Stemless Reverse *27 C11 PL 4 SE*
Rare varieties. . . C2 (R7) about 12 known *28 C13 PL 4 SE 29 C8 Sp ch X*
11 R5, 4, 5, 4 *RC AGS 6K*
Error coins like in 1795, start after C6.
Will talk about later.

C6 - King of the die states - 40 (?) Gene Braig.

36 *21* *28* C6 Denticles over M, CA, U to 200

[FRANK SINATRA "THAT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR"
1804 my wife...

11/15 1805 Another good year.
Four varieties, eyeball different.
Two common, even in mint state. Same stemless reverse.

~~One rather rare C3~~

~~(32A) One quite rare C2~~

C1 Stemless reverse is

(32) C2 Small 5 stems. ^{Price} Best of only 3 as nice as Fine. ~~Price~~ ^{55K}

~~none~~ in Good 5x C3 25 or 30 total RC ~~but~~ 1 G6
C3 Small 5 stems. Lumped together, but quite different
in rarity. ^{different} Roger Cohen sale had 8; he had several
others, perhaps 50-60.

(33) C4 (Reverse of C3, also)

11/20 1806 Like 1805, a good year. (34) C1
Four eyeball varieties. Stemless again.

C3 quite rare (less than 20 known), C2 rather rare (no
fully mint state, but at least 1/2 dozen AU) R4

(35) C3

One board of C4, C1 lots of mint red coins not well
struck up. Don't confuse with wear. Don't overpay,
even for a slabbed red. The true population is "quite
a few"

(36) C4

(37) C4

No great die states, or controversies.

1807 A relatively dull year.
One variety-common.

(38)

(39)

(40)

Early and late die states. Early rarer, premium.
For those who collect some die states, include this
one.

Won't cost much, ^{because the dents show} Very late ^{die crumbling}
^{up even on a well struck} ^{left side of obv}
^{are examples of early state.}

11/25 1808 This is a very good year.

(41) C1

Three varieties, one of which C1 is very tough. Die
crack misaligned, the rarest of any 1/2c variety. Six
known. Roger Cohen's sale C4, 4th FK (61 6) Discovered
1952 RSC location of leaf under D. Worth the hunt - 200 times reg. overdate

(42) C2

(43) C3

(44) "C4"

Another C2, rare, and extraordinarily so in high grade.

This only uncirculated.

Third C2. Several uncirculated. Number of AU. Common.

Not just lack of under 7, very different 8/

Also includes the second of Gilbert's two blunders,
the 1808 G3. This is only specimen, Gilbert's coin. You can
examine

C1 very rare overdate

C2 somewhat rare overdate

C3 8

(X)

G3 I am not so. HWH from large cents.

END

LUNCH

END OF DRAPED BUST

- A 1804
B 1802
1808
1805
1806
C 1803
1800
1807

TURBAN HEADS

1809 An interesting year.

6 varieties

C1 rare, unknown to Gilbert (about fifteen known)- most others have a few uncirculated, number of AU's

2 others with interesting die cutting mistakes corrected (C5 known by a name with an error "9 over 6")

C4 inner circle

C1 Rare: high leaf under r. edge of S. This (VF30) 2nd best by 5 pts or so

C4 Inner circle

C5 "Overdate"

Has interesting break. an error term.
NOT overdate, corrected error in die.

1810 A boring year.

1 variety, common - even in uncirculated.

No interesting die states.

Some weak stars, even on uncirculated.

1811 More interesting, even though only two varieties, and the differences between them are not great.

Relatively rare date, sells at a premium, and quite rare in high grade. Only two or so uncirculated in each variety; only ten or so in each that are better than VF.

C1 - Wide date - 18 massive 4-star break - one of best known - priced separately CQR. Not very rare - up to VF little premium. Much rarer are intermediate states of this break.

C2 - Not-quite-so-wide date Same reverse

Mickley Restrike Fourth of four famous fakes. Reverse of 1802. Rusted. Mint dies.

1812-1824 13 missing years.

A gap. Robert Patterson, Director of the Mint, did not like (or have high priority). His retirement and death July '24. New Director, Samuel Moore.

1825 Not very interesting. Two varieties. Slight difference in placement of date. Same reverse. No interesting die states.

C1 is a bit rarer. Hard to find better than EF.

FIRST PROOFS SHOW UP, although the two best 1811's have been so described.

1115
1826 About the same; a bit more interesting. Two varieties with slight differences. However:

(53) C1
(X)

C1 almost became a 14-star variety.
C2 a bit rarer, especially high grade. Because die broke. Also, removal of misplaced 6.

1827 None made.

1828 Some interest here, too. Three varieties, none rare, one famous:

(54) C2

C2 Twelve star. ^{Die-maker's error.} Available in all grades. Sometimes hyped as rare. ^{Left} Stars not well struck up.

(55)
(56)
(X)

C3 Available in red uncirculated. Collins hoard.
Don't overpay - not rare.

Proof.

1829 Another boring year. One variety. Common. Engraver scratch thru reverse. Few proofs.

1830 None made.

1120
1831 Rare date, with some controversy. Proofs known. Also ^{about 15} circulated specimens. Are all (or some - or none) of the circulated coins former proofs? If so, where do they belong in the condition census?

(57)
(58)

Note high leaf

Orig. Total no:

Proofs 6 or 7

Circulated 15 or so (almost all are VF to AU)

(59)
(60)
(61)

^(will. reverse with leaf)
First Restrike - 30 or so; some struck after restrikes of 1836 (~~different reverse~~) - **DIE STATES, CRACKED DIE!**

2nd Restrike Rev of 1840's type

Advice Very expensive date - top circs more than pfs. RC's VF 25 \$7,500
~~is~~ Do not pay a lot for a high-grade specimen because it is "one of the finest known" unless you are comfortable that it is not a circulated proof, or don't care if it is.

(62)

(63)
(X)

Do not pay even a little for an 1831 which looks like this: (altered 1834). **I have brought this for you to look at, too!**

1832 Not very interesting. Three varieties - none rare - all same obverse.

C2 pf's

1125

1833 Boring year, but one with a trap in it. One variety very common.

Made proofs, then used dies to strike circ coins. Many of these early circ. strikes look deceptively like proofs. Lots, maybe most, of the 1833's sold as proofs are really not (even in reliable auctions). Very hard to tell - Some I'm sure, some I'm not.

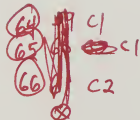
Clashed dies very common.

Half a roll 25 red uncs - last color picture at back of Breen book.

1834 Boring year. ^{are} Common ^{variety.} Some proofs. In same sets as 1804 \$1.

Same reverse as 1833. Clashed and repolished.

1835 Also not very interesting. Two varieties with same obverse, slightly different reverses. Both common.



In 1925, a hoard of about 1,000 uncs was found. Well preserved red uncs not hard to find. Great coin for a type set. Don't overpay for the slab or alleged rarity. Probably sold to unknowledgeable "investors" at inflated prices based on exaggerated comments about rarity of 150 year old coin in mint red condition. Also applies to 1828.

GREAT COIN FOR A TYPE SET!

1836 Either a non-event, or a very exciting year, depending on how you feel about proofs.

First of proof-only years. No circulation specimens. Some clearly struck later than 1836. Purpose and authorization murky, at best.

Two die combinations:

Original Restrikes (1st and subsequent)

2nd Restrike Weird combo reverse 1840's 5 known
More about all this in 1840's.

Gap 1837-38-39

1837 Token

TRADITION
Common. Very rare uncirculated. 2 or more. Even AU.



NEW TYPE - CLASSIC HEAD - DIFFERENT REVERSE STYLE, ALSO

or...boring. RSC ambivalent

1:30 1840-48 Wonderful, proof-only years. Almost everything one
can say about these years applies to all of them:

70

Originals: Large berry reverse. Some considered
to have been made in year of date. Evidence being
presence in proof sets of these years. Also, a few
were spent-circulated examples. In addition, some
were restruck in 1860's from these dies - for collectors.
WB identified by series, using weights, color. Remarkable
research. EPC and EHC.

71

1st Restrike Small berries. Doubled letters. NT
most prominent. Also restruck from time to time.

72

2nd Restrike Small berries. No doubled letters.
Diagonal die file marks over RICA. Restruck from
time to time.

Subvariety? Heavy planchet. 96 grains! Available
in all 9 years. Identified in WB (Series V) except
for 1844, which I have since found.

Some variations year to year. Rarity, for example.
Some much rarer than others. Most common is 1841
original. Good choice if you want only one of the
Pf-only years.

Also 1840 and 1841 struck on reeded planchets, crushed
by collar. Some trace of reeding often visible.

It isn't scratches.

TALE OF MINT SHENANIGANS

1:35

1849 A transitional year.

Two varieties of proof only. Small date.

- 1) Large berry reverse. Sometimes called "original"
to conform to usage of earlier years.
- 2) Small berry - doubled NT reverse. (No example
of RICA reverse with 1849 obverse)

Also an 1849 struck for circulation.

LARGE DATE A very few proofs of this die are known
as well, undoubtedly minted from the new dies before
they were used for circulation/strikes.

1850's In general, boring years. Die hubs used for total coin, except for date. Some proofs struck from each ~~year~~ of circulation ~~date~~ ^{date 1850-1853}. All dates except 1852 common, even uncirculated; proofs available.

However, there are some items of interest.

1852 is the standout. Last of the proof-only years. And, a controversy.

73

1) The large berry reverse. 5 known. Long referred to as ORIGINAL. Controversy, since 1894 Brobston catalogue devotes almost a whole page to a defense of this terminology. (Cohen II p. 121-2)

2) Reverse doubled NT 1st restrike

3) Reverse RICA 2nd restrike

1853 Only year after 1811 for which no proofs exist. None ever even reported. If you find one, please sell it to me for an exorbitant price. 1853 also hard to find in red uncirculated. Poor quality strikes.

1854 Some with rust pit on 'I' of United. Different die, or die state? Dunno? One other item I will come back to.

1856 Pit on 'I', same die.

74

Proofs of two dies - some restriking in 1860's.

75

Copper-nickel pattern. Trial to test new, harder alloy. So much harder, never fully struck up. Available. 72 gr. 88/12; 69 gr. 90/10 ??

76

X

hair, leaves, dents

1854 Pattern Story.

1857 Proofs of two reverses.

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

181

182

183

184

185

186

187

188

189

190

191

192

193

194

195

196

197

198

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212

213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260

261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

273

274

275

276

277

278

279

280

281

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

305

306

307

308

309

310

311

312

313

314

315

316

317

318

319

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

340

341

342

343

344

345

346

347

348

349

350

351

352

353

354

355

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

368

369

370

371

372

373

374

375

376

2. Quick review of the process:

- 2a. Planchets punched out of rolled copper strip.
Same today.
- 2b. Dies Prepared first individually, hardened (annealed).
Later: hub or master die, used to stamp major design devices in working dies, with dates, sometimes letters, other small details added individually.

worn, damaged repaired!

- 2c. Edge Lettering Device two straight dies, between which the planchet is rolled. Castaing device.

Striking process:

- 2d. The blank planchet placed on top of one die, held in place by collar or something - not clear. Then, other die brought down on top. Raised up, the struck coin - hot - brushed into container of new coins, and the next blank planchet inserted on the lower die. Most of the process in use since Greek days, several centuries BC.

3. "What could go wrong with such a simple, low-tech process?"
you ask. Murphy's Law. Everything.

Have brought examples of most of these for you to see

- 3a. First, let's look at planchets

- 1) bad quality metal - cracked planchet
- 2) bad quality metal - flaked metal
- 3) clipped planchet - round
- 4) clipped planchet - end of strip
- 5) overweight, underweight - 94, 40's, 2nd reverse
- 6) unavailable planchets - reuse. TAL details visible, edge letters visible
- 7) salvage metal - spoiled large cents (sometimes cherry-picked as damaged) badly rolled, overweight, visibly badly cut, misshapen.
- 8) salvage metal - 50¢ trial pieces. Governmental thrift.

19 →
⊗

- 3b. Let's look at dies:

- 1) omitted devices: 12 star, stemless reverse, no pole
- 2) overdates (changed) (02, 08) but careless enough that some part of earlier date shows
- 3) poorly corrected mistakes 1/1, 09/06
- 4) left in use after damage
clashed (many)
spiked chin
broken (many); 04 C7; 96 C1, 11 C1

- 3c. Edge lettering

- 1) omitted edge lettering
- 2) partial edge lettering
- 3) doubled edge lettering

3d. Now the fun begins - the minting process.

1794 C1
81
82
83

- 1) skip the dies altogether - blank planchet
- 2) get placed only part way into dies - off center
- 3) dies not parallel, misaligned 1808 C1
- 4) fail to get removed after striking, get struck again-double struck
- 5) same thing on purpose - first strike ~~way~~ off center
- 6) flipover
- 7) same thing, but not ejected as a new blank planchet put in - brockage, double struck
- 8) same thing, part way
- 9) same thing, except new planchet centered, previous one ejected part way
- 10) same thing, restruck to correct
- 11) two blank planchets at same time - uniface
- 12) triple struck will see
- 13) combinations: broken die, off-center, double struck

84
85 86 87 88
89 90 91 92 93

94
95
96-101
1809 C6 102

103

QUIZ: Double-struck on one side only, rotated 60 degrees between strikes. Single struck on the other side. Could have been that was double-struck both, obliterated or worn. But too sharp, don't think so. How could it have happened? You have been given and seen enough to identify two ways it has actually happened - with evidence. Passing grade if you can identify one. (Bachelor of having a good time) Distinction if both. (Master of having a good time) Should be teaching this course if you can describe an almost certain method to tell by looking at the coin which of the two methods was used on this coin. (Doctor of having a good time) Took me fifteen years of collecting errors to realize the answer to this.

Story about calculators, and the guy next to me.

3e. Outside the mint

- 1) already mentioned Mickley restrike, 1795 G2
- 2) counterstamped
- 2½) holed, mounted
- 3) altered 1834 to 31
- 4) reengraved 95 to 96
- 5) reeding added
- 6) electrotypes
- 7) "cleaned," smoothed, damaged, repaired, reengraved, recolored to make higher grade. Intent to deceive.

May run into any of these from time to time. Some easy to spot. Others not. Experience, or trusted advice. Pay tuition.

2:30 PM

Q BREAK - LOOK AT ERROR COINS

3:00

H. Now We Are Going to Turn it Around; You Are the Experts

Breen pp. 123-127 and 135-140

And, I am a collector who has come before you to plead my case and ask for your support.

Why? As I promised you at the beginning of the course:

I think I have identified a new subvariety, never before described as such, and I want it to be accepted as such by you, as a panel of distinguished representatives of the 1/2¢ fraternity. This class is the first to hear of this; hasn't been written about anywhere, so your verdict will carry a lot of weight. At the end, I will ask you to vote.

First, however, let us review the general concept of subvariety. You will remember that this morning I said "In general, something is considered a subvariety if it has the same obverse and reverse dies but has a significant change in edge or planchet." However, we are now ready to move from that general description to a more detailed examination of the concept and its history.

SOCRATES: The beginning of wisdom is the definition of terms.

Gilbert did not use the term, although he describes three of what we now consider to be subvarieties. Two of these he called different varieties, (95 2a and 2b - his G3 and G8; 97 3a and 3b - his G2 and G1), and one he did not assign any different designation to (95 5b).

Breen says (p. 85 2a), "Subvarieties are coins differing in authorized weight or edge device, though struck from the same dies. (This definition must be stretched slightly for 1795-1802, but for the moment, it suffices)." He does not explicitly define the nature of the stretch, but it is clear that he includes unauthorized differences in weight; even those which are careless, rather than intentional.

94a + b differences in edge letters not "authorized" 95 5b, 6b

Cohen's discussion is similar (P. XII a3 and b1) "For the dates 1794, 1795, and 1797, there are die combinations struck on planchets which have differences in edge markings and/or weight. In these situations, I have assigned a small letter to follow the die combination number. . ."

"In setting the standards as to whether a die combination will have a further refinement as set forth in the preceding paragraph, I have eliminated errors in edge lettering, die breaks, and, with one exception, variations in the weight of the planchets. The exception on planchet weight occurs on die combinations 5 and 6 of 1795. In this case, the Mint used thin, plain edge planchets weighing approximately 84 grains, and thick, wider, plain edge planchets weighing approximately 115 grains."

(Examples: 94 a & b; 95 #2; 95 #5, #6; 97 #3a, b, c) Cohen and Breen agree, in general, on that. But WB TAL & every LC planchet. Cohen, however, does not do so. AND some element of intention (1794 no edge letters is error). Moreover, Walter Breen is possibly a bit inconsistent because he does not consider the 3 1795 #6 on 50c as subvarieties.

As a matter of ^{fact} ^{its} ^{pleasant} fact, because ~~it~~ always ~~is~~ to deliver a little more than ^{one} ^{has} promised, I am going to submit for your approval not one, but three new subvarieties.

They form a group, in my opinion, like the edge-letter subvarieties of 1794, or the thick planchet-thin planchet subvarieties of 1795, C5 and C6. In fact, they have some of the characteristics of each group.

These coins I call the thin planchet-lettered edge subvarieties of 1794 and 1795.

These are not all newly-discovered coins. One in particular comes from the Brobston collection of 1958. Cohen Lot 42. (MEHL #94 11/28/39 Lot 257). It has been considered an error, just a random light-weight planchet (see Breen p. 129). "No duplicate has been reported. In all likelihood, it is not an intentional subvariety, and it shows no trace of overstriking on any other coin. Probably this planchet was cut from a single strip, which had been rolled too thin."

(A) But, I have found five more such coins. The six are: 2 of 1794 #9, 3 of 1795 #1, 1 of 1795 #2. All six specimens are here today for your examination. I believe they are not errors, but deliberately coined thinner planchet versions. Why do I think that?

Let's review the previously known varieties and subvarieties of 1794 and 1795. Using cohen numbers.

(B) First, the thick planchet varieties, minted to a 104 grain standard. All with lettered edges.

Next, let's consider some previously known errors or oddities - the omitted edge letters 94 C1, C9 - one known of each, and the alteration 1795 G2, the edge letters ground off. No dispute exists about these.

Now, remember that in 1795 there was a switch to the thinner, lighter planchet, an 84 grain standard. All of these had plain edges. *all have been long known - Gilbert...*
(C) In fact, some were minted with plain edges and a heavier weight. We called these subvarieties 1795 5b and 6b. The extra weight was not authorized. It probably wasn't intentional. It was probably just carelessness. 5b was known as long ago as 1890, in the Parmalee sale; 6b was RSC in 1953.

Remember that 1795 #5a was when errors started showing up. These 5b and 6b planchets cut LC heavier, thicker. Just not take time to roll down to proper 1/2¢ thickness. Remaining LC details we see confirm that *source of these planchets and explain the extra thickness*

(D) Next category of edges is the so-called LEL & SEL which we have discussed. Clb and C2b are varieties which were first seen in the Alvord Collection, sold in 1924. Commodore Eaton had mentioned this in a 1921 article, with respect to C4 also. Then, between 1973 and 1976, specimens were found *bringing the total to* six varieties with the alternate edge letters Clb - 6b.

(E) (errors and 1795 G2, an alteration)

(F) Now, here we insert in the picture our proposed new subvarieties 94 9b, 95 1b, 95 2c. Thin planchets, lettered edges.

They have same lettering as others. But, they are visibly thinner, as you will see. And their weights are much less than the regular 104 grain standard.

Here is what I think happened:

- Price of copper went up. No Xb from July 94 to Oct. 95 for circulation*
- 1) Summer or early autumn, 1795, the consideration of reducing the weight became serious. Act of Congress 3/3/95, authorized President to do so (not below 2 pennyweight for cent = 48 gr; 1 pennyweight 1/2¢ - 24 gr).
 - 2) But the question arose - Can a thinner copper planchet for the half cent be well struck? How will it look? Will our presses and procedures work with thinner copper planchets?
 - 3) Let's try a few and see. Order (or hand make) a small number (100-500?) at various weights.
 - 4) These planchets deliberately were made and the edges were lettered, either to test the adequacy of the thinner edge to receive the lettering, or else routinely, because all copper coins *had* had edge lettering up to then.
 - 5) A few of the planchets were struck with the last dies in use - 1794 C9. Two of these (so far) survive. (July 8, 1794 - last C9. Oct. 27, 1795 first deliveries of coins dated 1795). *These were C1 & C2a, still old heavy planchets*

- 6) Results: Obv & rev look good. No problems with the process. Recommend new standard Dec. 3, 1795. But gee, the edges look sloppy. Letters run off the sides of the thinner edge.
- 7) Decision: After consideration of smaller edge letters, or different devices (gripping on large cents), realized no need for edge device on copper coins. Not filed like gold and silver for a little dust. Go on thin planchet, plain edge. Recommend to President he authorize lighter weights (December 1795).
- 8) And what about the struck coins, the 94 C9's? Put 'em in circulation. Don't waste the copper.
- 9) And what about the rest of these lettered edge blank planchets? *in the meantime, what happened to* Throw 'em in the blank planchet hopper. They are good enough for half cents. Don't waste the copper.
- 10) And so, a few more, *of the test, thin, lettered edge planchets* were pulled out and struck as they came to hand, either, 95 C1, or 95 C2. Coinage of half cents had resumed in October, 1795.
- 11) Finally, on December 27, 1795, President Washington authorized the lighter weight. And, the striking of the plain edge, thin planchet 1795-dated varieties began. Continued into 1796.

What is the evidence that something of this sort happened; that these were intentionally struck as thin planchet lettered edge coins, rather than accidentally underweight error planchets?

- a) The timing. Last three thick planchet varieties. All struck *on dies that were in use* after Congress authorized the President to approve weight reduction. Unknown before. If errors, a coincidence. Possible, but timing of dies available. C9 also matches period when such tests, if they occurred, would have been made. NONE appear AFTER approval given (all existing planchets, including any surviving thin LEs, remelted).
- b) The weight itself. Very near the new standard actually adopted. And, the difference much greater (%) from standard than any variations known in other thick planchet varieties (1793 C1-4, 1794 C1-8). Could be another coincidence, of course, but. . .
- c) No incentive for planchet manufacturer to make light weight. Paid by weight.
- d) Is it likely that the mint itself would have recommended the lighter weight without testing to see how the coins looked? We know they made die trial pieces in that era.

- e) And isn't it also likely that the test coins and remaining planchets would be put into circulation as half cents, rather than discarded? Yep, it was the golden age of government thrift. (50c trial pieces, error large cents)
- f) The number of them. Six (at least). 1.86 percent (x54) rule (Breen p. 139 b1) means at least 324 planchets originally. Lots of planchets very light. More than "a single strip."

But, COULD they all be errors? I guess so. Just doesn't seem likely to me.

Oh, and by the way, the disappearance of the edge lettering may have caused some public comment. That and the lighter weight might have created some reluctance to accept the new coins. We know from SBA fiasco that public acceptance still not guaranteed.

LATER
So, someone higher up, or in Congress could have said, a year or two later, "Why don't you guys try again to letter the edges of a few of these half cents? And, if that doesn't work, maybe there is some other edge device that wouldn't take as much room that you could try?"

And so, in 1797, when the C3 variety of dies were in the presses.

A couple of the objections that might be raised to the creation of new subvarieties:

- 1) Too few to count as a subvariety Buy, hey, 94 6B is only one known. 4B only three known. And, they have been around awhile. When these are publicized, good chance more will show up.
- 2) Weight alone not enough: What about 95 5b and 95 6B? Those are weight alone. Some show LC undertype and some don't. And difference % versus no greater.
- 3) May not have been intentional variation in weight. But, hey, no evidence that the heavier weight of 1795 5b and 6b, both with same plain edge as 5a and 6a, was intended.

LOOK AT THE COINS - DISCUSS

Well, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, let's take a preliminary vote. Then, we can talk about these coins, and, if you like, vote again. Giving you six choices. Check one or more.

Definition of terms: Subvariety generally has been used either for difference in edges, or weight, or both. Variety is each different combination of obverse and reverse dies.

I. Summary and Conclusions

Hobby should be fun.

Told you all I know - more than I know. Catching the so-called experts in a mistake is one of the joys of learning in any field.

I ain't lost. Don't be intimidated by what you don't know. You aren't lost!

Ain't what you don't know that gets you in big trouble; it's what you do know that ain't so.

Enjoy, sentiment, not as investment. Learn.

Grandfather's watch.